JI March 13, 2002

TO: Distribution

FROM: B/Headquarters ISO 9001 Executive Management Representative

SUBJECT: Headquarters (HQ) ISO-9001-based Quality Management System (QMS)

The purpose of this memo is to provide all HQ offices with:

1. Information regarding upcoming HQ QMS activities in preparation for our recertification to ISO 9001:2000;
2. Actions HQ offices need to take prior to the recertification audit, and
3. A strategy for completing all actions and preparations to ensure a successful recertification audit.

As you recall, when we transitioned our QMS to comply with the ISO 9001:2000 standard, documentation requirements were much less stringent than previously. However, for the HQ customer products it was necessary to have customer satisfaction, product and process measures, and continual improvement mechanisms in place. In February 2002 National Quality Assurance (NQA), USA completed a successful preliminary assessment of the HQ QMS. NQA noted no issues in these areas with our customer products at the highest level. That is, we were able to successfully demonstrate that we had adequate processes in place. However, when the next tier of processes was examined, we were not always able to demonstrate that the same standards were in place. The assessment resulted in two nonconformances focused on the following issues:

1. The lack of processes for measuring and monitoring research implementation, including capturing data for decision-making. The emphasis is on measuring the implementation process data not the research results data.
2. No demonstration of data evaluation to determine the effectiveness of our Agency-wide Safety & Mission Assurance program. The emphasis is on field center data forwarded to HQ.

In essence the auditor asked these questions:

1. What are your organization's responsibilities? What does your organization do?
2. How do you measure whether you are accomplishing these responsibilities?
3. How do you continually improve your processes and products?

When these questions were asked, some managers were unable to answer them. Hence the nonconformances were levied. Our QMS has been so designed that we should all be able to address these questions. It is encumbent upon us to all be able to answer these questions for our responsible areas.

The ISO 9001 Program Office is working with the HQ offices where the nonconformances were found to properly define and submit a corrective action plan to NQA. However, just as importantly, due to the nature of the nonconformances, it is possible that similar situations may exist in other HQ offices. Therefore, to ensure that we adequately address these situations, I request the following:

1) Strategic Enterprise Offices review their research programs that are not covered by the Program Commitment Agreement (PCA)/Program Management Council (PMC) process. The intent here is to determine whether the research process has indicators in place that will provide HQ data used to make decisions regarding implementation. The analogy is the PCA/PMC process, which establishes parameters and indicators that are periodically monitored in order to determine the continuation of a program or any necessary corrective actions.
2) Functional Offices review their processes for determining overall effectiveness of Agency-wide functional responsibilities. The intent here is to determine and be able to demonstrate how elements in the Functional Leadership Plan are measured for effectiveness using HQ or field centers generated data that is provided to HQ.

In conducting this review, I suggest that you and your next level managers assess how you would address the questions listed above. I ask that you complete these reviews and identify any necessary corrective actions by March 27, 2002. By completing these reviews and taking corrective action, we can ensure that the nonconformances found during the preliminary assessment do not exist in other offices. The ISO 9001 Program Office will assist you in this review as requested.

Next, an internal audit of the HQ QMS addressing all clauses in the ISO 9001:2000 standard is required prior to our recertification audit in May 2002. This internal audit will be conducted April 1-5, 2002. The internal audit will also include a review of the corrective actions planned or taken by HQ offices as a result of the nonconformance identified by NQA during the preliminary assessment. The auditors will basically be looking for the answers to the above questions. Mr. Dave Lambertson and Mr. Bill Hartman of Qualitec Consulting will conduct the internal audit. The ISO 9001 Program Office will provide Mr. Lambertson and Mr. Hartman with any necessary documentation in advance of the internal audit. All Headquarters offices are responsible for ensuring proper personnel, documentation, and records are available during the audit. Mr. Robert Kovach, Headquarters ISO 9001 Audit Manager, will develop the audit schedule in consultation with your Corrective and Preventive Action System representatives.

Lastly, at our semi-annual HQ Quality Council on April 24, 2002, I will brief the council members regarding their role in ensuring process performance and continual

improvement measures are addressed. This briefing is specifically designed to better prepare you for the NQA recertification audit in May 2002.

Enclosed is a summary schedule and milestone chart of the upcoming events and actions required prior to the recertification audit on May 13-15, 2002. I appreciate your continued support of our QMS. Please direct your questions regarding the corrective actions and process review to Ms. Marcietta Washington at 358-4427 or mswilley@hq.nasa.gov and the internal audit to Mr. Kovach at 358-0710 or rkovach@hq.nasa.gov.

Michael B. Mann

Enclosure

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